

**Robert S. Divine  
708 Grace Street  
St Marys, Georgia 31558**

January 4, 2016

Members of the St Marys Planning Commission

You will soon be asked to consider an issue that will have great bearing on the future of St Marys, the proposal to rezone the mill site property. As you know, this matter has attracted, and will continue to attract, a great deal of public attention.

In order to get a better understanding of the issues, I have met personally with several City Council Members, Mayor John Morrissey, Community Development Director Jeff Adams, JDA Chairman Charlie Smith and JDA Executive Director James Coughlin. I have done extensive Internet research on the principals involved, ASM Capital and Mr, Christopher Ragucci. I have attended two public presentations by Mr. Ragucci, and had the opportunity to discuss this with him when he made the public presentations in December, and when he met with the Development Authority of St Marys. Until my term expired at the end of last month, I had the privilege of serving as Chairman of the Development Authority for the last two years.

Rather than continuing until my replacement to the Authority Board had been selected, I resigned at the end of November so that I could speak out on the rezoning issue, which I think is the most important economic development issue since the establishment of the Kings Bay Submarine Base. I was recently appointed by the City Council to serve on the Master Planning Steering Committee, but I resigned when it became apparent that some members of the Committee felt that it was inappropriate for a member of that body to raise public questions about this most important development issue. Thus, I speak out only as a private citizen, with no ties to the City administration.

Since the filing of the proposal application for rezoning I have been active in trying to raise citizen awareness and to suggest questions for the City Council and the general public to consider. Some of this has been in public meetings, some with postings on a website set up for the purpose (please see [www.portofstmarysga.com](http://www.portofstmarysga.com)), and some by email.

Many of the questions raised were related to the specific uses proposed by ASM Capital/Port of St Marys, LLC. As the communications and presentations from Mr. Ragucci have continued over the last year, the proposed uses have varied considerably. At his last presentation, on December 15, Mr. Ragucci stated that he really had no idea what the uses might be but, if we only would approve the rezoning, he was confident that some uses would be found!

It has now become obvious that approval of the rezoning proposal will be a vote against responsible and timely re-development of the mill site. ASM Capital's involvement brings no value, but will only add to the cost of development, and will reduce the economic feasibility for an end-user or a responsible industrial developer.

The attached is a copy of an email sent out to a growing list of interested citizens. In it I have attempted to summarize the situation as it now stands. I apologize for its length. But as you know better than most, this is a complex issue. I respectfully ask that each of you take the time to read the attachment, and to give it your thoughtful consideration.

Thank you for your service to the City, and for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert S. Divine

Attachment: *Time for Action* document

CC: Mayor John Morrissey  
Members of St Marys City Council